

Weyerhaeuser Longview -- Chlor-Alkali Plant Cleanup



Agreed Order for Feasibility Study and Cleanup

The Department of Ecology, under the authority of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCOA, Chapter 70.105D), has drafted an Agreed Order to Weyerhaeuser governing a site cleanup. The Order would require Weyerhaeuser to prepare a Feasibility Study for an on-going cleanup of mercury contamination in groundwater and soil at the closed Chlor-Alkali facility in the Longview complex.

Your comments on the draft Agreed Order are welcome through February 11, 2000. Comments may be submitted in writing at any time during the comment period. The box at the right provides information on where to review the draft Agreed Order.

What Is An Agreed Order?

The proposed Agreed Order is a legal document, signed by both parties that formalizes an agreement between Weyerhaeuser and the Department of Ecology. The Agreed Order will ensure that the environmental impacts associated with the past production of chlorine and caustic (sodium hydroxide) at the site are investigated and cleaned up as necessary to protect human health and the environment. The Agreed Order directs Weyerhaeuser to describe the existing contamination and conditions at the site and to prepare a feasibility study of methods or technologies that could be used in the cleanup of the contamination.

Site Background

In the mid-1950s, the Weyerhaeuser Company began production of chlorine and caustic for its pulp and paper mills. The production technology used elemental mercury. Leaks from pumps, valves and process lines resulted in mercury releases to onsite soils. In the mid-1970s, this production process was replaced.

This change effectively ended the production-related loss of mercury to the environment. Several removal actions have taken place since then to eliminate the most contaminated soils. However, some of the mercury that was released more than 20 years ago is still detectable in soil and groundwater. Groundwater at the plant, which discharges into the Columbia River, has been monitored for mercury since the 1970s. Based on water and sediment sampling upstream, downstream, and adjacent to the plant, the Columbia River does not appear to be adversely impacted. Additional information on the background and history of the Chlor-Alkali Plant can be found in the *Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Work Plan: Chlor-Alkali Plant, Longview, Washington* (CH2M HILL, 1995).

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PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

January 12 to February 11, 2000.

SEND WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT AGREED ORDER TO:

Cris Matthews
Department of Ecology
Southwest Regional Office
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775
(360) 407-6388

INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

The Draft Agreed Order and associated information may be viewed at the following locations:

Department of Ecology
Southwest Regional Office
300 Desmond Drive
Lacey, WA
(360) 407-6388

Longview Public Library
1600 Louisiana
Longview, WA
(360) 577-3380

printed on recycled paper

If you have special accommodation needs, please call (360) 407-6300 or (360) 407-6306 (TDD).

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What is Being Done?

To date, Weyerhaeuser has removed much of the mercury-contaminated soil, and worked with Ecology to assess ground and surface water contamination and to evaluate possible impacts to the Columbia River. The Agreed Order directs Weyerhaeuser to develop a feasibility study that will describe the actions necessary for the further clean up of residual contamination identified in soil and ground water on-site.

What Happens Next?

Involvement in the public participation process will be encouraged through a mailing sent to neighboring properties and interested parties. This mailing will describe the public participation plan and opportunities for involvement.

Ecology will publish the draft Agreed Order for public evaluation and comment. This public comment period will run until February 11, 2000.

Notice of the public comment period for the Agreed Order will be advertised in The Daily News (the local Longview newspaper) and through a press release. Notice of the availability of the draft Agreed Order will be included in the initial mailing to neighboring properties and interested parties.

Ecology Wants Your Comments!

You are invited to read and comment on the proposed Agreed Order through February 11, 2000. The public comment period presents an opportunity to have your ideas and comments heard by Ecology. The box on page one provides details on where the documents can be found and how to submit comments. To review more detailed documents than those found in the information repositories, call Cris Matthews of the Department of Ecology at (360) 407-6388, in Lacey.

Please submit your written comments by February 11, 2000, to Cris Matthews at the address shown. Ecology will respond to all written comments received, and revise the Agreed Order, if necessary. Updates of site activities will be provided to those who submit comments or who ask to be placed on the site mailing list.